

NEWS CGIAR

Consultative Group
on International
Agricultural Research

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CGIAR Optimistic About Financial Future

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Despite a general slowdown in foreign aid by most major donors, financial experts of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) are predicting continued longterm support for the 13-center research network.

Contributions to the CGIAR continue to rise -- about 5 percent a year -- although the system will likely experience short-term problems in 1990, officials of the 18-year-old consortium indicate.

Yesterday, during a 1990 funding session at the CGIAR's annual meeting here, 36 donors collectively pledged \$240 million, a 6 percent increase from the previous year.

However, due to a record budget increase, pledges fell about \$35 million short of the system's core, or essential, budget request. The CGIAR this week submitted a record \$276 million budget for the operations and capital expenditures. The 1990 budget represented an increase of 16 percent from 1989.

Ravi Tadvalkar, the Group's Senior Financial Officer, said the 1990 shortfall would delay the start up of some new programs and physical plant improvements.

He noted that donor countries continue to increase their support to the system. In 1975, he said, the CGIAR received 0.35 percent of development assistance outlays by donor countries; in 1988 it received 0.44 percent from a total of \$46.6 billion.

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The CGIAR began in 1971 with a nucleus of four existing research centers established in the 1960s by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations in Colombia, Mexico, Nigeria and the Philippines. Initially 15 donors pledged \$15 million.

Since then, the ranks of donors have grown to 36 providing \$250 million -- a 16-fold funding increase in 18 years.

Tadvalkar stated that the role of the foundations has diminished in recent years, while donations from international and regional institutions have risen to almost a fourth of the total.

About 70 percent of the resources donated to the CGIAR are provided by the world's richest nations, but donors members also include China, India, Mexico, Nigeria and the Philippines.

The top national contributors to the system in 1989 were the United States, Japan, Canada, West Germany, United Kingdom and Switzerland.